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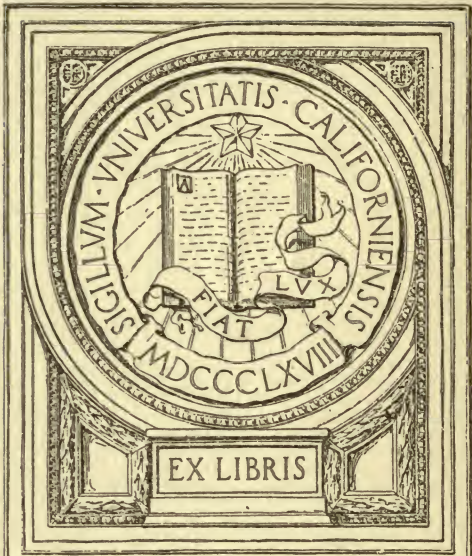


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**THE MOUNT OF
TRANSFIGURATION
DARRELL FIGGIS**

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THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

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QUEEN TARA. A TRAGEDY. 1913.

NOVELS—

- BROKEN ARCS. 1911.
JACOB ELTHORNE. 1914.
CHILDREN OF EARTH. (*Shortly.*)

STUDIES—

- SHAKESPEARE: A STUDY. (1911.)
STUDIES AND APPRECIATIONS. (1912.)
Æ.: A STUDY OF A MAN AND A NATION. (*Shortly.*)
THE LYRIC CRY. AN ANTHOLOGY. (*Shortly.*)

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

BY

DARRELL FIGGIS

MAUNSEL AND CO. LTD.

DUBLIN AND LONDON

1915

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TO THE
DIRECTOR
CALIFORNIA

TO Æ.

*Because you have known the secret things we praise,
Have seen the shining powers that lurk and sway
Behind the changing show their gestures raise,
Until God's music withers the world away;
Because you have seen the vision we would make,
The man who is himself the larger art,
Who in the burning dreams from which we wake
Builds the new temple in his own wise heart;
Because in your own prowess unafraid,
Secure of wisdom, you have turned to give
To other waygoers what they need of aid,
As is most meet in your prerogative :
Therefore we come to you and, one by one,
Render you tribute of the things we have done.*



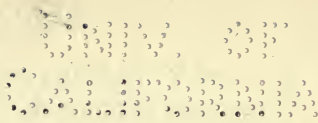
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RENCOUNTER

ON a dull hour when all Life fell weary
And its use was clothed in colours tristful,
When the loves I loved once did deride me,
Draping all the heaven with curtains dreary,
Suddenly a presence came about me,
And I cried to her with eyes so wistful,
'No, I want you not ; go from beside me !'
'Ah, but think, you cannot do without me !'

Some of my dreams stood achieved before me,
Other dreams as yet were penned in heaven ;
None of them had found themselves a lover,
Not even her who on her brave heart wore me,
With her cheer of cheer—I do not doubt you.
Then I answered, 'Look you, I have striven ;
Take your burden back, I give it over.'
'Nay, but see, I cannot do without you.'

Profitless in love or faith or guerdon,
Spat upon or mocked with soft derision,
So they shone there, some in heavenly cunning
Waiting till my shoulders took their burden.

RENCOUNTER

So I cried out, 'Why should I be loser?
'If my eyes were cleansed of fruitless vision
I were free to mingle in Life's running.'
'Save that neither you nor I is chooser.'

Then I turned to her who stood so proudly,
Her or him, so beauteous, so refulgent,
'Dreams on dreams I know, yet having spun them,
Wrought them into musics overloudly,
Look, as now I shred them, all unrueing,
For I to myself am least indulgent,
See them, oh, the blemishes upon them !'
'Courage then ! for seeing's half of doing.'

All my hours arose, my toil, my labour,
And I saw the things I wrought within them,
Wage-work, ordered for a general pleasure,
Sung not, fashioned not on harp or tabor :
Then I answered, 'When I do not woo you,
When I seek my own, my labours win them
Plaudit, comfortable cheer, some treasure.'
'True : yet tell, what are such toils unto you ?'

Naught, I knew it : faggots for the burning,
Hewing, shaping wood, and drawing water,
Seeing brass where gold should steer the vision,
Menial toil to win a menial spurning,

RENCOUNTER

Taskwork worth no trouble of refining.

'Oh!' I cried, 'to serve the High God's daughter,
It is hard—the hatred, the derision!'

'Yet 'tis thro' such clouds the crown comes shining.'

So my dreams came floating down to greet me,
Dreams that yet I had not wrought to numbers
Floating in their colours rich and fervent.

And I said to her who stood to meet me,

'Truly are they beauteous, yet to woo them

Labour and a zeal that never slumbers

Ruthlessly exact they from their servant.'

'How else, tell me, did you think to sue them?'

Then was I rebuked; for in the past time,

In the hour when Life was pure and golden,

I had sworn to dedicate my living;

And that like the first should be the last time

Making music with all wonder fragrant.

'Oh!' I cried, 'I know my hours beholden:

Nor may I revoke my ancient giving.'

'And I knew it; were you ne'er so vagrant.'

Standing there, the dreams done and despited,

Floating there, the dreams without a fashion,

Far without, the world with lip derisive,

In the years, stark labours unrequited—

RENCOUNTER

Well I saw them all, and well I knew them,
And I spoke, half-grimness, half in passion,
'As I dream my dreams, so now decisive
Will I dedicate all hours to do them.'

Then spoke she, with countenance bright-gleaming,
'Song is the pure utterance of the godlike,
Song is purest joy in purest being ;
And who fashions song recalls from seeming
Into being all the dreams that perish,
All the hopes that otherwise were sodlike.'
Saying which she fled in flame, and, fleeing,
Left me yet one other dream to cherish.

SONGS OF ACAILL

SLIABH MÓR

I STOOD among the ancient hills
While all the dusk eve's blue array
Swept round with softly rustling wings
To still the glamour of the day.
The murmur of persistent rills,
A lone thrush with his communings
Of music, folded in some trees,
A piping robin ere he flew,
And the soft touch of a calm breeze
Sghing across the heavenly view,
Were the sole voices whispering round
The slope hills with reflective sound,
So still the whole Earth was :
So very still it was.
The solemn conclave of the hills,
In an erect fraternity,
Expectant of the hour to be -
Were trembling in the calm that fills
The house of Being with its peace.
A measured rhythm flowed abroad
From old Earth of the heart so strong,
That was itself a manner of song,

SONGS OF ACAILL

Bidding the day's tame tumults cease
Before the coming of her lord.
The throstle as he communed low
Enchanted seemed, and tranced, and spelled,
To catch the measure of that flow
That from the mighty heart upwelled,
That his own song thereby should be
Lost in the inner immensity.
The trickling music of the rills
Along the bosom of the hills
Was to that larger rhythm bent,
And in that larger silence played.
The very winds that came and went
Were in their courses stayed,
Hushed in a mute expectancy.
The quiet Earth was bent in prayer.
And I, as I stood there,
Scarce witting what my body knew,
Was hushed to adoration too.

Like a charmed cadence throbbing low
Along her scarred mute visage, so
Flowed the Earth's spirit thro' the air
Emerging from its ancient lair,—
Flowed round the dusk and glooming hills
That stood in solemn peacefulness,
Flowed thro' the shimmer of air that fills
The valleys with a shadowy tress,

SLIABH MÓR

Flowed up where stars began to peep,
Flowed where the hushed winds lay asleep,
And sank again while peace profound
Wrapped all the ancient hills around.
Not a breath stirred ;
No voice or song was heard.
It was a silence vaster than the dead ;
It was a silence where in all its power
Being raised up its mighty head an hour.
And I, tho' I scarce knew what chanced,
Caught in the measured rhythm, and tranced,
Was yet raised to a terrible dread
Of that great hush that wrapped the hills :
That spell upon the standing hills.
I could have fled, but that the awe
Of an unfurling and strange might
Had me transfigured in its law.
And yet the fear that stirred in me
Was mingled with a wild delight
That thrilled with very ecstasy
Thro' every nerve and vein and mesh
Building my quivering house of flesh.

Then a strange shudder shook the hills.
Some movement swayed them in eclipse,
As tho' a dread apocalypse
Were waiting till they were upfurled
With all the travail of the world.

SONGS OF ACAILL

They were transformed, and shadowy-high
They stood there, and yet floated by ;
While from some inner place of flame
A boom of distant music came
Suddenly thro' the air,
And huge and silent chords of sound
Soared o'er the quivering hills around,
As I hung trembling there.
My house of flesh could scarce contain
The rolling chords that swept abroad
And undissolved remain,
My joy stirred in me with such pain.
Loosed on the silence that had been,
Obeying its symphonic lord,
The music rolled thro' time and space,
Booming in changing chord on chord
Amidst a silence that seemed still
Upon the old Earth's brooding face.
It rolled round each reverberate hill ;
It crashed its high symphonic will
And floated all the vales between,
In clouds of colour mounting high,
In waves of music sweeping by,
Booming above the ancient peace
Betwixt the ancient silences.

What chanced I do not know.
How is it I should know ?

SLIABH MÓR

Like rolling clouds before the day
The booming music rolled away ;
And, like a storm of splendour past,
The silence seemed yet to outlast
The music it had ushered so.
Then slowly the wise thrush arose
And mused away the evening's close.

SONGS OF ACAILL

COIRE DUBH LINN

THE voices of curlew crying on the air
Floated about the silence of the hills.
The brooding visage of the mountains bare
Seemed the mute passion of a thousand wills.

From the black waters of the dizzy pool
Cupped in the rocky sharpness of their sides,
Enchantments curled up to their foreheads cool,
Like a large gesture that reveals and hides.

Then thro' the tangled network of my mind
I sank, as down a steep and endless well ;
A sudden darkness and a rushing wind
And a sharp terror caught me as I fell.

So I saw God : as like a man may see
The Spectral Beauty and be living still.
His crowding thoughts flowed thro' eternity,
And His quick eyes searched out my secret will.

Then shining rainbows hid Him wholly up.
But a large peace had filled me at the sight :
Like crystal waters in a golden cup,
Brimming above the sides into the light.

BOGAĆ BÁN

BOGAĆ BÁN

A WOMAN had I seen, as I rode by,
Stacking her turf and chanting an old song ;
But now her voice came to me like a cry
Wailing an old immeasurable wrong,
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

Like a grey ribbon over the dark world,
Lying along the bog that rose each side,
The white road strayed upon the earth, and curled,
Staying its journey where the hills abide,
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

It was not that the Night had laid her cloak
About the valley, going thro' the sky,
And yet a dimness like a distant smoke
Had fallen on the Earth as I rode by,
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

Sweeping the sides of the mountains gaunt and high,
Floating about their faces in the pool,
A shadowy presence with a rustling sigh

SONGS OF ACAILL

Crept thro' the valley till the valley was full :
My horse's hoofs fell softly as on wool :
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.

In musical measures like an echo dim
The hosting held its secret path unseen :
Sliabh Mór looked down to Mám, and Mám to him
Looked up, with Loch na nÉan between :
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.

A new world and a new scene mixed its power
With the old world and the old scene of Earth's face:
A doorway had been folded back an hour ;
And silver lights fell with a secret grace
Where I endeavoured the white path to trace
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.

Within my mind a sudden joy had birth,
For I had found an infinite company there :
The hosting of the companies of the earth,
The hosting of the companies of the air,
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán,
The white, strange road thro' Bogač bán.

LOCH NA N-ÉAN

LOCH NA N-ÉAN

BEAUTY that was before the world became,
Beauty that shall be when the world has been,
And so the incommunicable flame
Burns thro' the vesture of the earthly scene.

Deep in the waters of the tranquil lake
The lonely Sliabh Mór stoops his snowy head
For winds down Gabhail an Mhám to set ashake,
Dreaming of hours where hours themselves are fled.

The cry of curlew wails about the air
Echoing in the silence suddenly,
And like low voices speaking everywhere
Comes the wide murmur of the ruining sea.

Thro' the dark waters proud swan push their way
Like wraiths that find a noiseless path to go,
From hidden valleys to the westering day
Five wild geese moaning pass, and vanish so.

Gabhail an Mhám is pronounced as though it were written *Gowl a' Wawm*.

SONGS OF ACAILL

Mists are above the hills, and all things fade
Like veils that clothe a secret loveliness,
That it may drape yet may not always shade
Burning beneath it for the heart to guess.

The lake dreams in a reverie strange and still,
The company of the hills dream everywhere,
A desolate glory slowly seems to fill
And float about them, streaming thro' the air.

So the great Earth-face shines, and the Earth's frame,
So burns beyond it, and about it, and between,
The Beauty that was ere the world became,
Beauty that shall be when the world has been.

CRUACHÁN

CRUACHÁN

COIRE MÓR and Coire Beag and Coire Dubh Linn,
Set round the Mount of Vision where the world
shines fair,
Guarding its secrets from the feet would enter in,
And hinting in mysteries what is pure as air.

Terrible are the places where the inner light is
thrown
Making the outer brightness full of shadows dread
and strained,
But the earth is mapped and a singing joy is known
When once the Mount of Vision has been won and
gained.

SONGS OF ACAILL

INISGALLUN

THE winds are roaring out of the West
Where the clouds are in stormy saffron drest,
And the curlew and wild-geese are calling and crying
Over the straits in Inisgallun,
The heron and cormorant wailing and sighing,
Mingling a wild and an endless tune.

The winds are roaring out of the West
Over the waters of strife and unrest,
The shrieking rain in the low pools falling,
The strong waves beating a ceaseless rune,
And the heron and curlew and wild-geese calling,
Vainly lamenting in Inisgallun.

The froth and fume of the maddened sea
Spit thro' the torn air ceaselessly ;
And the dark low bog in anguish crying,
And the heather wailing in bitter pain ;
For the winds from out of the West are flying
And the Earth will never find peace again.

AILLANÁN

AILLANÁN

WORLD beyond the search of sight,
Where no drift of thought may go,
Glimmering thro' the world of might
Like shadowy lights round a flame of light,
Why do you haunt me so ?

Down the fields of the sky the sun
Goes to be quenched of his will
In a world where wave and heaven are one,
And shadows with feet invisible run
On water, and heather, and hill.

Strange hostings are surging everywhere
In the passing flutter of day,
Tossing handfuls of feathery air
In gusts, like the kiss of a truant hair,
And in laughter fading away.

Faint voices whisper secretly
A tune that I know too well ;
And the light that glints the wave, the free
Space of the earth, in an ecstasy
Image the things they tell.

SONGS OF ACAILL

And I yearn to run on the wings of the wind
To seek you out if I may ;
Unutterably longing to find
Your borders beyond the courts of my mind,
So near, yet so far away.

ANACH

ANACH

THERE is no peace now however things go,
No peace where the ways of men ring loud,
Save in a secret place that I know
Hidden as in a cloud.

All the high hills stand clustering round,
Arched to protect it from trouble and noise,
The great strong hills that sing without sound,
And speak with no voice.

There lies Caoróg the mute low lake,
And Bunnafréimhe lying aloft,
Peacefully sleeping, or even if they wake
Lapping low and soft.

Upon the high hilltops the heather may be crying,
And over the hilltops the voice of men are heard,
But here only water lapping and sighing,
Or the wail of a bird.

Peace, peace, and peace, from the inner heart of dream,
More full of wisdom than speech can tell,
Dropt like a veil round the show of things that seem
With an invisible spell.

SONGS OF ACAILL

FEAR BRÉAGACH

A SILENCE like a woven sound
Where no voice has a will to break
The poise in music that all make,
Or tear the magical profound,
Slowly began to eddy round
The heather waving on the hill.
In stretching circles wider still
Spinning, it drew within its sway
All clamours stirring in the day
That clothed the hills sleeping in peace
With gold airs like a breathing dream.
A plover as it called and fled
Wailed like the echoing cries that cease
Falling along a sudden well.
The winds that all the raging night
Had torn the heavens in their flight,
Swung in slow balance like a beam—
Not banished, but updrawn instead
In the swaying silence that now fell
Over the sunshine with its spell.
And all the quietness seemed to be
Lifting its head expectantly.

FEAR BRÉAGACH

The hills that slept and dreamed
In their loose mists of gold
Seemed to know well the spirit that streamed
About the places they enfold
In swaying silence slow.

Full well they seemed to know :
As though the very sleep they slept
Was like a house wherein they kept
The powers that stirred abroad to be
Loosed in a solemn revelry.

And the steep valley the pale sun
Filled up with mists that gleamed and
shone,

Swaying with undulations slow
To wash the walls of the mountains so,
Like moving waters from which come
Enchantments thro' the sleeping air.
As a voice stricken numb
With wonders it cannot declare,
Too many and too great,
The silence that had fallen on
The noonday earth, trembled upon
Speech, and a rush of joy elate,
Altho' no murmur and no sound
Availed to break the hush profound.

And then it seemed a voice was loosed.
Perhaps it was a wandering rill,

SONGS OF ACAILL

Winding its journey down the hill
In bog and stone and heather noosed,
Had found its music suddenly,
Had, from the silence, been set free
To pipe its measured note.
Perhaps the piping came afar
Over the dreaming hills to float
And call a slow and measured bar.
For in some secret place a tune
Slenderly fluting like a rune
Quietly trembled, and then ceased :
Even as the thin and quavering sound
Along the brooding heath increased,
It sank away ; and all around
The hills seemed suddenly to awake
And nearer, closer stations take.
The Earth contracted was
By some swift magic of its laws ;
Or so it seemed :
Mionnán had come across the bay,
Eoin Dubh above the distance gleamed
Beyond the glamour of the day,
Cruachán and Sliabh Mór brotherly
Trembled along their shouldering earth ;
And a wild tumult in my blood,
A pain of fearful ecstasy
Full of strange terror and wild mirth,
Swept thro' my being like a flood,

FEAR BRÉAGACH

Where no cry could dismiss or wake
That silence like a shining lake.

It was as tho' my soul
Struggled to be set free,
Crying against the body's strong control,
Crying to join the wild fraternity
That was abroad, and know
What revel they mixt so,
What revel, or what solemn ritual.
For there had come a silver call
Like echoes over brooding seas
Loosed, where a heavy silence is.
And I half knew the rout that surged
Slowly about the slope hillside,
Like sunlight whirling in a tide
That ever to one place returned.
Sometime a sudden arm emerged
Lifted in winning loveliness ;
Sometime a tongue of flame upburned,
And fell back where the sunlight lay
The waving heather to caress ;
And sometime wisps of brightness
 seemed
To curl and rise up thro' the day
That on the strong Earth gently dreamed.
And always like a nameless Name
A sound of silent singing came

SONGS OF ACAILL

Sweeping the mountains like the cool
Wash of a wave that passes so,
From worlds where silence is more full
Of music than the ear may know.

Then, in a vision suddenly,
On sharp Mionnán beyond the bay
Another tumult I could see
Fling brightening answers thro' the day.
Like two slow-whirling pools of light
They each spun, raising higher and higher
Their deep wild songs of festival,
Flinging their flames of answering fire,
Mingling their secret ritual.
Light leapt to light and rune with rune
Mixed in a maddening ecstasy,
Full of all fear and such wild glee
As tears the builded palace of thought,
And makes the semblance of things wrought—
The body slowly shaped and hewn,
And the long labour of the brain—
Seem like a barrier to desire,
That in a sudden riot of pain
Swiftly shall be dissolved in fire.
For in that sacrificial hour
A strange and secret life had power.

If I had fallen out of time,
Or I had seen the secret host

FEAR BRÉAGACH

That haunts the margin of Earth's coast
Erect its hidden rites sublime,
I knew not, nor could tell
The manner of the spell
Had fallen on me suddenly.
For like a far voice from a world
Where clamours are together hurled,
Emerged a plover's wailing cry
Like a dying echo passing by.
The valley in its mist of blue
Lay like an old familiar boon ;
The hills stood up erect and high
Swathed in their golden robes of noon ;
But as I lookt on them I knew
I was to them and they to me
What we had never thought to be,
For in their secret shapes they shone
A terror of beauty to look on.

SONGS OF ACAILL

CRAMPÁN

I KNEW not what it was that drew me out,
Plucking at me where I sat restlessly
Watching the turf-flame, what dishevelled rout
That passed beside the hill and summoned me.

Moonless and starless, like an open pit,
The night hung, where all life was hushed and still ;
Heaven and the breathing Earth were merged in it ;
And I know not what chanced upon the hill.

A memory of a darkness where Earth lay
In music swaying on the slow night wind,
Of breathless hours that gently flowed away,
Clings, like a mountain mist, about my mind.

But thro' the darkness there came on me so
A quiet fire that burned about my brain :
And nothing can dispel the peace I know,
And nothing quell the ecstasy like pain.

INISCLARE

INISCLARE

AS a great bird in a deliberate flight
Parting the mists like a hanging curtain,
You come in a stream of sudden light,
You come, as you will, in your ways uncertain,
And float before my dreaming sight,
 Inisclare.

Then in the places where the half-blind
Perplex their eyes, thro' a white mist o'er me
There comes upon my troubled mind—
The noise of the curlew crying before me,
And the sound of the great hills booming behind,
 Inisclare, Inisclare.

SONGS OF ACAILL

BUNNACURRIGH

OVER the bog the rain is drifting like long veils slow
hands are shifting
Past the place where light is lifting burning from a
world that shines
Like a halo everywhere ;
Through the bog the water streaming down each
silver path is gleaming
With a lustre that lies dreaming over its ravelled and
twisted lines,
And lifts into the air.

Down from Mám the wind is coming over the bog-
side calling and humming,
From afar a heron drumming may be heard beyond
the rain
Lashing on the sodden Earth ;
Yet a memory of Being far beyond the drift of seeing
Passes suddenly and, fleeing, holds the heart in a
sharp pain
Of the waste and dearth.

BUNNACURRIGH

Desolation, desolation, like a world waiting creation—
Yet at some strange evocation, burning through each
fold on fold,

Like a light hidden in a throne,

A dim beauty fairer than seeming lifts and shines and
passes streaming

Over the Earth where I stand dreaming in a pain no
heart can hold,

Crying and crying alone.

SONGS OF ACAILL

MÁM

HEAVY with mists the winds that made the heather
Cry with a voice that died in the low grass,
Went on their way, and all the hills together
Huddled among the clouds that hid their mass,
And a low piping came.

There was no voice except the heather wailing,
And the gaunt hills that had broken in a cry
As the quick wind along their sides came trailing ;
But stillness had swept over them with a sigh
When that low piping came.

Only the seas along the cliffs far under
Eased the sharp hush that tightened like a girth
But a far singing like a distant thunder
Slowly came mounting from the depth of Earth
As that low piping came.

Voice swelled to voice like chords of music booming,
From worlds as near as far but beyond reach ;
In dripping mists the mighty hills stood glooming ;
Yet always as though uttering into speech
That patient piping came.

MÁM

Then a sharp terror suddenly fell upon me,
And a wild joy lit through me like a flame ;
And I know not what light shone whitely on me,
When I stood forth like a god in desire,
When I bowed low to kiss the breast of fire,
As the slow piping came.

SONGS OF ACAILL

MIONNÁN

IN a stern world of wisdom and command,
That has no man enticed,
Among these gaunt wise hills, and these
Strong cliffs and sundering seas,
Suddenly in a light I understand
The wonder-words of the Christ :
And Joy quickens its flight through endless Beauty,
And Beauty wins through a Love higher than Duty.

COÍM

COÍM

BURNING above the golden heart of day
A white light falls like petals through the air,
As though the throne of Earth had fallen away
Before the presence of a world more fair.

The world that builds itself in a bright show
Of shining hills and shining clouds and seas
That round the dreaming islands float and flow,
Flickers before a world more bright than these.

Hiding it yet it may not always hide,
For it is mixed with it as light with light,
Until it float where the branched ways divide
And vision is more pure than the close sight.

SONGS OF ACAILL

GOB RUAD NA COFRA

IN the deep world that cannot shudder away,
That builds itself on this as heroes build
Unsleeping fame on the fames that they have killed,
Music breaks into light, and bright lights play
Like flowers of music in a shadowless day.

So a light shines that lifts above the sea
Wider than earth and brighter than the sun,
Burning beneath the coiled wave, breaking upon
The stretch of air, till the world seems to be
A shadow passing in an eternity.

Like a soft cadence falling through the air,
Like shadowy voices calling from some place
That shines within and melts the fair Earth's face,
A murmur of singing passes everywhere
Over the semblance of the world so fair.

Oh, vision of things so near and yet so far,
Flowing and flowing like the sea flows away
And yet shines under the bright light of day,
What is this delicate builded world can bar
And yet reveal you where in truth you are?

GEARRAN BÁN

GEARRAN BÁN

BLEAKLY across the mountains the dawn swept
Coldly, with a white light that fell as rain ;
And the thronged mists suddenly shuddered and crept
Along their sides, slowly fading again,
And all the world was cold among the hills.

Curlew and wild-geese cried in the upper air
Where Night gathered up her darkness like a cloak ;
Along the Earth-side plover cried everywhere ;
Then they all melted away like a thinning smoke ;
And all the world was still among the hills.

The mountains among whom I trod my way
Like an intruder with dark presences,
Stirred strangely at the first white touch of day,
Stirred, and looked strangely across alien seas,
Before they took their strong accustomed ease,
Where all the world was hushed among the hills.

Slowly I lifted my eyes to pry on them,
But they were standing as they had ever been—
Save one like a fire burning in a gem,

SONGS OF ACAILL

Dreaming apart in a light no eye could glean,
Where the unseen shone goldenly through the seen,
And the world was strange and rapt among the hills.

Seeing that, a cloud of brightness swept on me,
And worlds on worlds on worlds passed flowing by,
Until, from a dream awakening, I could see
The Earth emerging to the light of day
That fell on the familiar comradely hills,
The old unchanging secret-guarding hills.

BEANN GHORM

BEANN GHORM

*THE ways of life, the ways of life,
Roll on among the days of life,
Yet never roll beyond recall ;
For where they wander dazedly,
They reel, and, slowly, mazedly,
Roll back into the All-in-All :
Yet always with a burthen borne
Back from the little earthen bourne ;
And always with an added grace
Brought narrowly from that madded place ;
And always, whatsoever shall be,
With a caught personality
That must pass on eternally.*

The heaven is blue, the earth is green,
And all the veil of air between
Is like a water through which shines
The world of men and its designs,
Seen at the bottom of a pool
Where all seems distant, strange, and cool.
Familiarity seems to wear
An unfamiliar seeming there

SONGS OF ACAILL

Where the white houses cluster low
Under a clear cold sunlit glow.
The road winds like a living vein
Through the dark bog, round Loch na nÉan,
Under squat Mám, to flow away
Where the dusk inland huddles grey,
While little darknesses upon it
Creep agedly and slowly on it
Like creatures with long years to go
An obscure destiny to know.
The surging sea sounds through the air
Like a pent music everywhere,
Like voices where no voice can be
Because no heart can tell its name.
And suddenly, all suddenly,
The creakage from a farming wain
Breaks sharply, and is caught again
Into the being whence it came
To take life in a gasp of pain.
Yet how, or why, or whence it fell
There is no living tongue can tell.

*Oh, silence that is more than sound,
Where every broken voice is found
And dissonance and music meet ;
Oh, staying that is more than going,
Where every hurrying path is flowing
About itself and is complete.*

BEANN GHORM

*Oh, place that is no place at all
Because it has no trace at all,
With every aspect lost in it
Because their hearts are crost in it ;
Where all torn fringes drift away
As the slow veilings lift away
To show the inner place of dreams
Without which nought could be that seems.*

The waters of the lake stare up
And look into the winter sky ;
The heavens look down like a great cup
And shine within that staring eye.
The fields, calm in their winter-dearth,
Lie carelessly about the earth.
The bog that never rest can know,
And broods in ageless passion so,
Flows on, as with a bended strength,
Flows round about the breadth and length
Of the spread earth, from which arise
The hills like sleepers old and wise,
And hints more mysteries with its spell
Than the wrought speech of man can tell.
And so the sea, on either hand,
Licks dreamily up each curving strand,
And sways and rocks, and rocks and
 sways,
To the world's end and end of days.

SONGS OF ACAILL

It is like an unreal might
That is more real than the light.
The very houses where they sleep
Seem narrowly snatched from deep and deep,
Building a semblance on some brink
Over which they may suddenly sink.
They seem like ramparts built around
A little woven spell of sound,
While all the music of all time
Booms in a symphony sublime
About the boundaries where they catch
Slender fragments to fit and match.
The very silence everywhere
Is balanced over the dizzy air,
As though it should, could but the bounds
Be broken by evoking sounds,
Loosen and slip to crashing thunder
That would melt the framed world thereunder,
Crumble all the fashion of things
As it swept past with beating wings,
Sweep away all the semblance that hides
The inner place where glory resides,
And open the world that is much more
Than the seen world that is its shore.
All the mapped island under me,
In bog and mountain from sea to sea,
And passing darkly where Mayo
Lifts up its clustered hills, seems so,

BEANN GHORM

An insubstantial builded place
Through which shines one transfiguring face.
Yet where the white cool houses greet
The falling sunlight at my feet
There most the silence seems to press,
Until the very quietness
Makes them seem, through the trembling
air,
Like phantasms of things that were
On some unreal strand of time,
As waves that leave a frothy rime
In token of some ancient tide
That turns on other shores to ride.
So life that is more than it seems
In all its tangled threads and schemes,
Seems suddenly withdrawn once more
From that which was its frothy shore,
And to possess its being whole
In the deep wisdom of its soul :—
When through the air swaying like a sea
A single voice comes tremblingly,
One voice that, swelling on its way,
Cries sharply and clearly across the day
From the unreal world it came
Like some uprising tongue of flame.

*The dream of life, the dream of life,
That floats through all the scheme of life*

SONGS OF ACAILL

*And is more than it seems to be,
Like a white glory shines around
The builded world, and twines around
The shadow-show that men may see.
The silences are the singings sweet
That round the earth-songs clinging meet,
Making all song a threnody,
A pain for the ampler melody.
The light falls on the edge of the world
To show it is no ledge of the world,
But even where it dwindles there
A greater beauty kindles there,
And, even where it may spin its part,
With all the furthermore in its heart.
In life we are in midst of Life
Fuller than all our petty strife,
From which swift intimations come
Shining to smite all nations dumb,
With memories older than old history,
Most strange, most near, in a shrouded
mystery,
That see the world a shining place,
Ah, but a divining place,
And know the world no resting place
But an adventuring testing place
Until the old divinities
Take up their hinted destinies
When the last light shall glint the seas.*

BEANN GHORM

Like an old memory that may burst
Suddenly in the quiet brain,
Until the larger peace that first
Possessed it, float around again,
So the shout strangely broke the day,
And so it gently passes away.
The dream of the world in which the world lies
Quietly sleeping like a flower furl'd lies
In the Beauty which it reveals,
Once more through the sunlight slowly steals.
The lake, the mountains, and the sea
Melt like a dew in infinity.
The bog flows on across the land
Like a rhythm that seems to demand
The supple larger life it shows,
In which, for a little hour, it flows.
The light falling about the air
Almost reveals the world more fair,
From which the seen world breaks to sight
Through the torn veils of seeming night.
The houses in the sun lie dreaming,
The little houses whitely gleaming
From which the quavering shout came up
Like a bubble to the brink of a cup.
And suddenly, all suddenly,
The puzzled memory comes to me
That, though my larger self be here
Where the bent arc melts in the sphere,

SONGS OF ACAILL

In the strange world of seeming lies
The searching sight of my two eyes ;
That in the life that is but part
Of the great Life, one beat of its heart,
Maybe even now I am taking thought
To win some battle closely fought.

*Oh, light that seems no light at all,
Shining through every vision fair ;
Oh, flight that is no flight at all,
For all our hungers lift us there ;
With what strange veils about our way
We struggle in the light of day,
Seeking to build a spirit to house us
When the pure world of worlds shall arouse us,
That prophets' dreams and poets' dreams
Acquaint us of who know its gleams
Even as we hold before our eyes
The vision wherein we are only wise,
The hope that is the memory
Of what we were and yet shall be.*

Over the houses like a thought
Drifting dreamily half unwrought
Curls a blue smoke that fades away
Where the sea turns to blue from grey.
It curls up under the cold sun
Like a stray woof of life unspun,

BEANN GHORM

Returning to the larger Life
Lying peacefully round the centre of strife.
The burning hearths of love and pain,
Of the leashed life fretting at its chain,
The adventure or the slow content
Within their little circles bent,
The puzzled labours of the brain,
The lights, the intimations lent
To make the world shine suddenly
Irradiant with divinity,
And all the laughter and all the tears
Of a life that comes and disappears,
Float like a pungent odour drifting
Dreamily over the dreaming seas
Through the world where the veils are shifting
Blown by a wind of memories.
Suddenly then the seeming life
Lifts up the memory of its strife ;
Whereas the larger life close-hidden
Lives like a limb where it is chidden,
Invading the embattled centre
With the dreams that are its secret mentor,
But eager, tense, and trembling there
Whence the blue smoke curls through the air.
Then as the noises from the roofs
Float up like distant-beating hoofs,
And voices like sharp tongues of flame
Leap where the silence has no name,

SONGS OF ACAILL

The phantasm of the builded world
Seems like a place where life is furled
Until the secret hour will shine
And all the veils shall drop away :
When each life and each life divine,
Built in the issue of the fray—
Building in pang and pain and throb
The temple of self no time may rob—
May burst into the fields of light
Brighter than any day is bright,
Making the world unreal seem
In the dream of the world that is more than a
dream.

*The fates beyond the gates of life
Bend low to the dictates of life,
Obedient to their first decree,
That he who would stand immune of the
years
Must find his spirit hewn of the years
Infallibly, infallibly :
That he who would come re-arisen of the years
Must take his hurt in the prison of the years
Where the hard, close travails be.
For there the bright immensity
Of the soul is wrought to a tensity :
Is shaped and smitten and battered there
Where Time's strange tools lie shattered there ;*

BEANN GHORM

*Is bathed in a crucible of fire
To temper and chasten and quicken desire ;
And, strewn though it be with a mystery
Of memories lighting all the brain,
Is passed through a tangled history
Of memories that befall the brain ;
Catching at vision and seeing beauty
Shining beyond all shackled duty ;
Until the wrought work build itself
As the fierce energy willed itself :
When, as the close war finishes,
The prison-house diminishes,
Where in the fading gleam of life
There shines the growing dream of life :
Lights fall upon the edge of the world
To show it is no ledge of the world,
But even where it dwindles there
A greater beauty kindles there,
Where the caught personality
Must always, whatsoever shall be,
Pass on, pass on eternally.*

BACCHANALS

BACCHANAL OF SUNSET

A CAPRICE

LEAPING across the pale fields of the sky
So they came trooping from the West,
In amethyst and amber drest,
Some in rich crimson tunics, some in high
And flowing golden drapery, some in pure
Delicate colours softlier to allure,
 Swift at the instant shut of eve
 In floating rituals to weave
Tumult of arms and noiseless flutter of feet
Down thro' the trembling air while Day hung sweet.

So they came floating down,
Down to Earth's green and brown,
To take a measure in her spaces there ;
 And as they sang their songs,
That fell like gentle dew about the air,
 The Earth's own secret throngs
Rose up to greet that joyful company,
 In crystal and opalescent
 Garments, each with a crescent
In pale white beauty where each brow should be.

BACCHANALS

Then in the midmost
Air, so they did most
Gladly delight them,
So to requite them
For the strong daytime
Hushing their playtime.
Each heavenly lover
Glad to recover
Each earthly sister,
Laughed as he kist her
Dancing a measure
In happy pleasure.
Dresses and tresses,
Tresses and dresses,
Mixed in a mazy
Intricacy hazy ;
Arms in quick rhythm
Lifted, and with them
Flashes of bodies white and so rare,
Wondrously fair :
Each in wild rapture
Wishing to capture,
In a bright cup,
The trampled juices
Running Heaven's sluices
In streaming colour, and filling Earth's ecstasy up.

BACCHANAL OF SUNSET

Faster and faster they flew in their dance,
Faster and faster, and higher and higher, until,
While their swift whirlings hid their colour and glance,
Light faded in the wonder of their skill.

Even where they shimmered
Light faded and glimmered,
And eastern shadows caught the whispering trees.

Silvery laughter
Echoing after,
Dances they knew then
In starry hue then.
And when the night
Fell on the sight,
They hung high on the shining Pleiades.

BACCHANALS

A BACCHANAL OF SUNRISE

OH, splendour burning through the fields sublime,
Flowing round about with shining robes of flame,
Trampling the blue courts of the House of Time,
In distant thunder, while the stars acclaim

Each other in tossed song,
Hail, hail, in a garment of light
Sweeping the cavern of the Night,
Hail, thou mighty and strong.

We look to thee but we know not thee nor see thee,
We have no knowledge of thee in thy might,
Save in the outworn rags of flame that flee thee
And hide thy naked body from our sight.

And yet, wherever we go,
Nowhere shall we know

Other strength than thine over all thy swinging earth.

Wherever we may be
There only we shall see

The gift of thy beauty mantling over her girth :—
Lying hid
The glory slid

Off from thy shoulder, clothing all her dearth ;

A BACCHANAL OF SUNRISE

Hid, till thy eye shall light on it, and then
Colour, thy darling, greet thee back again.

Reining thy horses in the vaulted East,
With burning eyes and sinews standing taut
About the thews of thine arms, some winds have caught
 The golden wonder of thy hair,
Flinging its tresses riotously athwart
 The gusty stadium of the Night.

Look how the cowardly stars, above the air,
 From greatest to least,
 Are palsied at the sight.

Look where about the high and dizzy stair
They stand, and through the dark-flowing curtains
 flare

 In terror of thy flight.

Mightily shod with wonder and thunder bright,
 Their necks curved proudly, and so fair,
 We hear about the dewy air

Thy champing horses burst through the fields of light.
Then, though the shows of the hosts of swarthy night
 May be quenched at thy triumphing,
 All the sleeping earth
 Wakes in a pæan of mirth ;
 Awakes in joy to sing
 In a massed chorus of song

To see thee coming in thy robes of flame so beautiful
 and strong.

BACCHANALS

Now, go we where we will,
There thou art victor still.
Now, seek we where we may,
The mantle of thy sway
Is flung wide and free
In its diaphaneity.
The lily's delicate shape,
The ecstasy of the rose,
The ruddiness of the grape,
And where the strong oak grows,
Look, thou art everywhere
Indisputably fair.

Yet though we see
The riot of thee
Flung over the earth for her most ancient use,
Though beautiful always so,
These are not thee, for lo,
These are the outworn strength thou didst diffuse
Going thy high-born way
In unwearied revelry.
These are thy thoughts completed, the soiled array
That thou didst cast from thee.
There thou goest leaping from strength to strength,
from joy
To a younger joy ; thou dost not know the cloy
Of wisdom mantling in a pool,
Of wisdom winding over its spool

A BACCHANAL OF SUNRISE

Pale thinking in memory of an outdone play.
It is we in whom Life fails to flow,
We who have known some passionate throe
Its after-languish wreak,
It is we ourselves are weak,
Who, finding footprints of thee as we go,
Muse on thy past things and content us so.

Therefore we dress thy brows with deity,
Therefore we find for thee vestments glimmering o'er
With all we fain would be,
And set thee radiant on a further shore
Glorious eternally.

Therefore we make thee a symbol in our thought—
When the blood in our veins
Frets us with weakness and pains—
Of strength full-fraught,
Proud in its high dreams, and through passion
wrought
Arrogant and supreme :
Striding through dream on dream,
Like the youngling gods whose eyes of wonder
blend
Wisdom and majesty and laughter without end.

So in thy golden garments streaming wide
Over the heavenly blue
And the Earth's varied hue,

BACCHANALS

The cup is at thy lips of heady wine

Ever at lip-full tide

Burst from pure harvests in some press divine ;

While for thy music through all time there
streams

A silence of bright song,

Fit revelry and fit dreams

That are neither right nor wrong.

Yet is thy passion so reliant and grave,

Needing no heady wine or mead to awake,

That like a wave

Too full to break,

It sweeps about our spent wills till we call

To share with thee the eternal bacchanal.

Then toward the fields of thy diurnal tread

We lift, in the pride of challenge, a high head.

Greater than thou are we

Even though awhile we be

Tricked in the puzzled ways of circumstance.

Indeed, thou art glorious ;

But thou wert ever thus :

Thou hast not known strong battles with stern
chance

To mould thee limbs elate for hours remote.

Where is thy vision ? Canst thou see afloat

Wisdom thrice-purged in vivifying fires

And chanting to the soul's most secret lyres ?

A BACCHANAL OF SUNRISE

Yet thou art hung a token to our view,
That, as through the battle and bruit
We strike a timorous foot,
It is frailty that is caught deliberative
In thought's pale hue.
For as thou goest about thy blue-flowing meads,
In arrogance and might
Awaking all life to live,
Scattering thy gifts about thee in a light
Of laughterful deeds,
Godhead glows in us as we see
That pure exultancy of thee ;
And lights flash in our dreaming eyes
While, through Time's puzzled mysteries,
Above our spinning thoughts, arise
Hints of far-beckoning destinies,
When life shall break her bonds and be
Ecstatic and shining and urgent and free,
Built in the difficult house of Time
For all Eternity, sublime,
When each weakness and chain
Shall drop from us, with thought and surmise and
agreeing,
And we shall stand up all high things to gain,
Finding within ourselves all wisdom shining in pure
Being.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

THE SHADOW OF TIME

BETELGEUSE, a dull red beacon, on a dark south-
western coast,
Fluttering like a guttered candle, lifted on me like a
ghost,
The strong hillside swelled beneath me, Earth the
mother raising me
High above the gloaming valley, where, with furtive
brilliancy,
There yet flickered some sharp earthlights, nearer
the eternal stars
That wheeled round the vault above me through the
trembling aery bars.
Strong and splendid was the hillside, strong and
tender in its strength,
Splendid in its slow firm curving through each foot-
way of its length.
Earth my mother raised me kindly, and I lay in deep
delight
Prone upon my back, and trembling, feeling her
caress of might
Shiver through my leaning body as I flung out both
my arms.
So she bore me above the world-toil, over the world-
moil and alarms.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Not a sound wounded the silence, but above the
house of Dream,
Where the body stays its pulse and the great Soul
stands up supreme,
Joy came on me like some music in a cunning
measure caught,
And my thought was no more thinking but a dream
resembling thought.

So I lay, prone, gazing upward. All the valley from
that seat,
If I did lift up my brow, would, suddenly, seem at my feet
Like a great, black cloth of darkness shining under
a vapour of blue,
Flung about Earth's middle fire-heart with some
glimpse of it shining through.
Round about me, in a dreaming congregation, hills
arose :
Strong and wise, even like the bosom that I lay on
in repose ;
Monarchs stirring to new power, lifting up their heads
alert
That were streaming with the pale fires with which
they were each begirt.
Power was out, and well I knew it : power that put
upon my frame
Weights that crushed me, though I knew those shin-
ing Great Ones each by name

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Where they stood, a mighty brotherhood that could
hail each other well,
And could commune with each other in the freedom
of night's spell.

Underneath me the Earth kindled, and within her
breast I heard—

Like a wind loosed suddenly on a hush where not a
grass had stirred—

Sounds of a great tumult running over the world
and calling me.

Then I knew them, and I feared not; they were
calling me to be

All myself when mingling freely with each wind and
stream and hill

In an unimagined splendour. And my body lay
there still.

Being, in a mighty tumult and a trampling splen-
dour, came

With a song mixed with its laughter and a mantle
like a flame

Shining round its limbs resurgent. Being rose un-
fetteredly.

Hills, those calm and secret mentors, doffed their
daily majesty,

Stripped all seeming from their true selves; every
rill, each twisted thorn,

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Lay no longer in the semblances their daily selves
had worn.

Earth was loosed in a bright rapture, and her voice
had called to me.

She was melted in the greatness of her spirit : I was
free

With the streaming, ruining multitudes of her shin-
ing presences :

And a singing came towards us from the hosts of the
wide seas.

Like long waves that swing through waters coming
from a storm aloof,

That sweep onward without a ripple, came that
singing down heaven's roof,

Burst up musically from the earth-soil, and in echoes
far and high,

Like vast strands of shining vapour circling under a
starry sky,

Surged in rhythms, swayed and eddied in white
patterns out and in.

Every presence that emerged shone with that sing-
ing from within,

Till all things were pale and shining in a strange
translunar hue.

And I knew the drifting music that the Earth had
broken to

Was her ancient choric dance ; and that the ecstasy
of our flight

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Round the spaces and the chambers of the beating
house of Night
Was its secret measure of power, its hidden rhythm,
that we swept,
In a brightness that was music of the surging dance
we leapt.

When as so the dance swept on, with fluting music on
its lips,
The dark hour of strife and cunning folded back into
eclipse,
While the music changed to light, and then the light
by some swift law
Surged and broke to sweeping music, on a rushing
flight I saw
Betelgeuse, a shining spirit, over a dusk south-western
coast,
In a streaming halo of red amidst a singing starry
host.

I stood wondering. The far legions surging, like us,
in and out,
Called to me, and from afar I heard their pure, clear
echoing shout.
All the tumult of Earth's dancing swayed about me
as I stood
Spellbound, hearing a faint music that the moist air
seemed to hood.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Suddenly I was an alien under the obtruding bars
Through which came the beauty of the host that
shone like many stars.

Earth's bright music flowed about me, but a passion
woke in me

To achieve a larger freedom, to tread through eternity,
When, before I knew my travel, Space flowed round
me as I sped

On and onward. Space was melted, dropping down-
ward ; and I fled

Swiftlier than the swiftly fleeting messengers of im-
petuous light,

Though it seemed not I but Space was speeding past
me swift of flight.

I was centred at the pivot of a living universe,
While about me great and shining spirits proudly
did rehearse

Mystical intricate dances in a grave unhasting pace.
Orbed in light the gods were mighty as they swept
the halls of space,

Whom I knew, though yet I knew not, in some
memory sublime :

Rank on rank in many Orders that before the clouds
of Time

Ever were and ever are and ever shall be, range on
range,

In a Being majestic through all the drift and flow
of change,

THE SHADOW OF TIME

They surged on me in great rhythms: robed in
many colours they
Swept upon the stellar revelry round me, past me,
and away.

I was mingled in a ritual that fled like a laughing boy
In whose eyes unvanquished wisdom lightens with
the freak of joy ;
And a memory lifted me into a kinship with that
rout
That, like sweeping clouds of colour, moved with
rhythms in and out.
Yet although I had my lot in its ecstasy, it strangely
seemed
That all space was speeding past me like a dream
that had been dreamed.
For the shining halls grew populous, and the orb-
like spirits came
Rushing wondrously like winds that trailed past me
in sheeted flame,
Mated some, while some came singly. But they
passed upon their way.
That grave dance that had no need to seek renewal
seemed to sway
Past me, thinning now, now clustering, reeling back-
ward, till at last
A great darkness stood around me, and the storm
of joy had passed.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Far behind me, like the brightness of a dream within
a thought,

Like a hint of light in darkness making darkness
overfraught,

Shone the stellar rout and revel ; but around me
through the gloom

Distance crowded upon me to shut me as within a
tomb.

Hung above eternal distance, if I fled or if I fell
I could tell not ; and a blackness cast its terror like
a spell

Round me, so that I cried out in a great dread beyond
all fear,

Knowing not, and thinking not, if there were any
that could hear.

Silence, primal silence, housed me, so sufficient of its
awe

That it could not find a harbour for transgression of
its law.

I thought nothing of the fleet, the nimble messen-
gers of Light

That were crowding all around me in a winged and
wavy flight.

Nor did I think to consider what their destiny might
be ;

Nor that I went quickly past them till their flight
seemed lethargy.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

For the dread, the nameless terror, that I could not
with a cry
Loosen, lay like chains upon me past all knowledge
to untie.
In the desert where no worlds were, in the unfathom-
able abyss
Where no spirits high and pure rushed on each other
with a kiss,
I hung lonely in my terror, housed in by eternity,
When a white and piercing brightness winged about
me suddenly.

I was standing on the threshold of a wonder-region,
caught
Wonder-stricken, trembling at its beauty in a dream
of thought.
Far and wide and high it shone, yet nothing of it
could I note :
From all quarters of that kingdom did such light
and beauty float,
From the air, and from the floor, and from the land-
scape and the sky,
That the pure excess of beauty overcame the seeing
eye.
Weighted by the further distance, then I cast around
to see
What lay nearer to arrest me : something that might
capture me :

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Something that thereby my vision should not grapple
with the scope
Of the accumulated beauty of the distance, range
and cope :
When I saw, just where that kingdom rankt above
Night's precipice,
Where the soaring region of Beauty captured seemed
from the abyss,
Two tall spirits that were standing weaving at a
noiseless loom :
And to them I took my passage like one treading
through a gloom.

Tall and pale and proud were they, with eyes that
saw as in a dream
All the universal gladness swaying in its well-wrought
scheme.
Like a dawn beyond the mountains, treading through
its dewy way
In long shafts of streaming colour from the chambers
of wide Day,
Shone their hair above their foreheads, while they
bent the loom to scan,
Where their swift and subtle fingers added span to
further span.
Then I saw what had escaped me: strands and
ribands of pale light,

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Wisp-like, floating to their fingers through the outer
depth of night :

Ribands almost, as it were, unspun and wound
from off a spool

On the other side of darkness, that had crost the old
night's rule

In quick-fluttering waves of colour interpenetrating
space.

So I saw the two majestical spirits stooping in slow
grace

To pick out from the intricacy of the ribands in
their flight

Here and there one deftly chosen for the loom of
their delight.

Then I came near to discern what it might be they
made so well.

Near the loom so white and shadowy, silent where it
rose and fell,

Silently I found my way ; and when I saw the cloudy
weft

Thoughts, remote yet quaintly near me, stirred
where memory's rags were left.

For, as I looked on that arras that those shining
spirits wove,

There I saw the record given of those that lived and
loved and strove—

THE SHADOW OF TIME

There I saw strange little people strive and thrive in
battle strange—
And above eternal Being down the many ways of
change
Came the knowledge that the teeming multitudes
that I could see
Had lived on the Earth itself whose memory strangely
plucked at me.
Tribes and tribes in armies—oh, I knew them well
wherever they were !—
In strange chariots running quickly over the dusty
plain that there
Fell from magical flowery mountains, in hard battle
rose from ease
Struggling with the tribes and tribes that flung them
throated challenges.
Further down that dreaming arras, on the clear west
that was wrought,
Tribes and tribes in lonely places after their straying
cattle sought ;
Tribes and tribes erected cities shining with snowy
domes of stone
That lay cool and gleaming under the sun that trod
the heavens alone.
And still further tribes and tribes : many of whom in
dignity
Went about their ways in pride of all the happy
hours that be ;

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Many of whom went furtively around the mapped
world in a mood

That left scenes upon the weaving that were like a
stain of blood.

Over vivid and dusty plains under the golden bowl
of noon,

Over plains of rippled snow swept by the hurricane's
ceaseless tune,

Among emerald meadows, through which, silvered in
their charactry,

Rivers curled, and rivulets, and shining lakes lay like
a sea,

Through damp mists that streaming rose to cloak the
hills and valleys green,

Winding about mountains that like sudden promon-
tories were seen,

Pushing barques on dreaming seas in hope to win a
helping wind,

In large heaps now, and now singly, as they lived
and loved and sinned,

So I saw Earth's thunderous nations on that silent
tapestry

That swelled up and billowed outwards, strive and
thrive unceasingly.

Dreaming strangely I came nearer to that loom
against the sky,

Even where the rainbow fabric musically left the ply :

THE SHADOW OF TIME

To the jointure of the weaving, where, on one side,
 fell the beam,
Where it rose, and swayed, and fell again, in the
 workmanship of its scheme,
I came puzzled and perplexed to examine that
 strange tapestry.
I came slowly, thinking deeply, of the things that I
 could see ;
And I stood in a half-wonder, for a memory in me stirred
Like a sound of birds at waking, that a tenth had
 not been heard
Of the rolling song of Life sung by the lips of men
 on Earth,
That a tenth had not been seen of all Time's anger
 or Time's mirth.
I stood there beside that arras, where the ribands
 of pale light
Fluttered to those searching fingers through the
 courts of ancient Night,
And I could no way unravel how that such a thing
 could be,
That its dreaming could but tell me half the tale that
 lay in me.

I stood there in a half-wonder. Then I turned
 away, and so
One of those same shadowy spirits with a dignity
 grave and slow

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Turned about and lookt on me with laughter shining
in his eyes.

They were like two lakes of water from the depths
of which arise

Visions of light that fill the air with brightness like
a floating mist.

I was lost in them ; and, slowly, as by a laughterful
exorcist,

All the universal spaces spread before me to behold.

And I saw as from a height the ravelled mystery
unfold.

Far around me I could see the stellar revelry mapped
and spread,

Weaving in intricate measures all the dust of light
it shed.

Then the musical Earth I saw, fragmentary as she
sped about

The burning spirit that himself had his part in the
larger rout.

All his shining strength fell on her, bathed her,
wrapped her in a cloak,

And then, laden with her history, swept from her
with one soft stroke,

And, just as a swimmer swimming through a water
dark as night,

Surged across the starry distance, slowly, and with
laboured flight.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Through the song-riven courts of Being, laden with
old history

Light came like a wayworn traveller, weary, and with
trembling knee.

Where no time was there I saw time, as amid a starry
array,

Through a joy full of all knowledge, history came its
heavy way.

In those universal spaces of the universal joy,
Where to think upon a far thing was to be there and
to employ

Strength and Wisdom in a Being that through all
the flow of change

Ever was and ever is and ever shall be, range on
range,

Through that labyrinth of laughter on its wisps and
ribands pale

Time, the agonist, held its travel with a frayed and
ancient tale.

Then the vision melted : suddenly once again I saw
those eyes

That were like two pools of water from which clouds
of laughter rise.

Like a thunder came that laughter bursting all about
my brain—

When a summons fell on me like a familiar snatch of
pain.

THE SHADOW OF TIME

That sharp brightness all reeled backward, and
through blackest night I fled,
Though it seemed not I was speeding but the nether
night that sped.

Suddenly the starry revels whirled about me, flying fast,
Each pure spirit like a long white trail of fire sweeping
past.

Each high gathering of the strong gods, throng on
interlinking throng,
Swept above me, round me, past me, on a wail of
dying song :

Till an old familiar singing came to me, and I saw
swathed

In long streaming bands of colour Earth's grave
bosom : washed and bathed

By the waves that round the beach of darkness, from
a tide of gold,

Surged, a heaving swelling brightness that in triumph
onward rolled.

On a flash, it seemed to me then, the weak body part
of me

I saw lying on a hillside stretched as though ecstatically,
When I sprang erect and wondering, and the first red
ray of dawn

Lifting over the dewy distance down upon my fore-
head shone.

Hills and streams and trees and ocean, and the wind
that rocked the air,

THE SHADOW OF TIME

Stood in that new day like spirits that had hidden
their essence rare

In the cloth of a mere seeming, and the heavens no
feet have trod

Arched above me like the visage with the smile and
joy of God.

On my lips there was the singing of a great and
nameless Name—

When across the dewy hillside in a distant echo came
Slow, grave chimes from a sharp steeple to exact the
passing hour.

Like a buffet it came to me, from a little alien power :
Then over the sunlit distance in the bending vault
of blue

Two great eyes I saw like waters with calm humour
shining through,

And a breathless laughter on the wind came breaking
like a song.

Then I looked within the Earth-veil where the throb
of life was strong ;

And I saw the secret presences that build up the
secret laws ;

And I laughed at that mad token of the thing that
never was,

Laughed aloud as I went downward from that holy
living hill

That when chimes and times are finished will be
knowledgeable still.

MISCELLANIES

ANGER

LORD, I would not be angry ; the strong soul
Thou gavest Man is so well-wrought a thing
That I would fain not let it pass control,
In wildest use to mar its radiant wing.

Yet would I keep my habitation fair,
Swept clean, and garnished, and in all things true,
Therefore I swing its casements to the air,
Letting the winds of anger sweep it thro'.

Disdainful men that do not take a thought
Of where their feet are planted on distress,
Haply I would covet them the things they sought,
Losing my vision gazing on success.

Envy and malice poisoning all things fair,
Quelling the voices from thy heights of blue,
Shall I not swing my casements to the air,
Letting thy winds of anger play me thro' ?

MISCELLANIES

FLOWERS OF THE EARTH

FLOWERS of the Earth,
Children begotten of our mother's bliss,
By whose dear mirth
Upon the airs she wafts us a pure kiss,
I would not have you die
Drooping away, and lie
With those soft cheeks swept lately of the sun
Soiled, dishevelled and dun ;
I would avoid that shame ;
Therefore I strew you over the keen and quickening
flame,

With ritual grave,
With reverent gestures and a holy care,
Each beauty so brave,
Giving its loveliness to the lucid air,
I send back whence it came,
I give to sacred flame.
Back to the Beauty beauty came to show
Each spirit I bid go.
And from beyond the veil
Rich musics float my dreaming memories to assail.

A BALLAD OF DEAD LOVERS

A BALLAD OF DEAD LOVERS

NOW how was it? My brain is tost,
And all my spirit is confused.
Perplexities most strange have crost
The margin of my thought bemused.

Did not strange garments round you wreath,
You in this flowing cincture pale?
And did you not kneel by and breathe
Mute promises and whispers frail?

Ah! orange blossoms in your hair
Were bound; a lily in your palm
Matched with the blush made you so fair,
Seeming so very pure and calm.

Its white and upright wonder hushed
The agitation of your look:—
And was it not thereafter crushed
Within the pages of some book?

Ah, all my gaze was on you then!
What were those questions made the air
Astonished of the world of men
Beside that slender altar-stair?

MISCELLANIES

Then stood we up erect and strong,
A sea of faces at our feet ;
While waves of music loud and long
Burst in bright spray about us, sweet.

Did we not then essay that tide
—It is so faint and distant now !—
Flowing about us every side
To throw white blossoms on our brow ?

Oh, Bride of Beauty ! Oh, Most Fair !
There are no blossoms now on you,
Yet do you so quell this pure air
That all the angels crowd to view.

Oh, brow so silent in its pride !
Oh, eyes where all bright lustres shine !
Oh, snowy breasts on either side !
Oh, fingers that entwine with mine !

Oh, Queen as peerless now as then,
So long, so very long ago !
See, angels greet you, as once men
Threw scented petals on you so !

Within a cloister hid apart,
And hung with roses to our bliss,
In the quick music of my heart
I bore you fainting on a kiss.

A BALLAD OF DEAD LOVERS

Breathless I gazed upon you when,
Blushing, you, in shy ecstasy,
Pluckt off the enveloping silks, and then
Unveiled your perfect self to me.

Dear, how your lips came up to mine,
Your head thrown back, your eyes shut fast ;
Content to brave the realms divine
Should that pure, perfect moment last !

It stands up sudden to me now !
We did defy the creeping day
That round the world's wide rim its brow
Lifted, to catch us in its sway.

Lip upon lip, and breast to breast,
And aching limb with aching limb,
Our passion of love was our pure rest,
And our pure glory the night so dim.

Sleep, did we? Sleep? Perhaps we did
'Twas but continuation so
In secret worlds more closely hid
Of that pure passion we did know.

Lip upon lip, and breast to breast,
Each moment was more charged with bliss,
Each splendour more truly manifest
Hung upon each dissolving kiss.

MISCELLANIES

Oh, all of me and all of you
Ached to invent some new device :
When a bright light broke on our view—
And, sweet, it looks like Paradise !

Oh, love of loves ! Oh, lips so pure !
Oh, eyes so full of joy at me !
Oh, breasts so exquisite in their lure !
Oh, flesh so white in its sanctity !

Sweetest, let us to some quiet place
Fly from these curious angel hordes,
Where I may in your shining face
Find out what new joy Heaven affords.

Where God has hung the lucent air
Like veils from His bright hand above,
There let us go, there live, and there
Drape the pure banner of our love.

IL MISERERE

IL MISERERE

IN a vast hall I stood awhile and heard
A pealing organ thread a wayworn theme.
Aloft the gloom 'twas hung, and like a dream
Fantastic was it deckt about, and blurred
By dusky shades that thro' the twilight stirred.
And as the plaining music thro' its scheme
Sobbed, in the shadowy darkness did I seem
Wrought so with iteration of its word
That in a sudden fear I shrank before
A wild gaunt God, who glooming out across
A stricken universe, uttered his sore
And bitter pain : who, seeing blight and dross
Where He had strewn fair gardens in rich store,
Turned, and wept inconsolably at His loss.

MISCELLANIES

DAY

WHEN the sable hues of sultry Night
Are washed away by Noon,
And when the Sun in all his might
Eclipses the pale Moon,
Then will I toss away squint Care
Earth's own exultant mood to share.

When the Sun's splendour floods the day
With a light where all lights be,
Making the pool of air to sway
Like a heaving golden sea,
Then will I let the rays so bright
Over my naked limbs delight.

Rioting in the wonderful hour
I will run over the hills,
In very plenitude of power
Forgetting all Life's ills,
And laugh until the dear old Earth
Shall echo back my tumult of mirth.

NIGHT

NIGHT

WHEN the garish vesture of the Day
Night, with her touch of balm
Omnipotent, shall put away,
And speak her dulcet calm,
Then with the moon's refulgent peace
I will bid sorrow and travail cease.

When at the margin of the woods
Moths flutter peacefully
When shadows in their floating broods
Haunt every bush and tree,
Then to the still Earth shall I go
Her secret ecstasy to know.

Wrapt in the mantle of the Night,
At the hosting of the stars,
I would forget Time's trivial flight,
Or that the Soul hath bars,
And furled with wide infinity
Gather all wisdom unto me.

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